

# Fixperts for schools: FAQs



## Fixperts

Fixperts is brought to you by FixEd, the network for people who want to fix the future.

Find further teaching resources and information at [www.fixing.education](http://www.fixing.education)



# Fixperts for schools: FAQs

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## Solving problems for others

Fixperts is a learning programme that challenges young people to create ingenious solutions to every day problems for a real person. Rooted in a creative, human centred design process and often making use of digital tools, it applies design, engineering thinking, practical making skills and storytelling for social benefit.

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## What do students learn from being Fixperts?

- Experience and understand design thinking and methods at human scale
- Make a clear connection between design and problem solving
- Develop skills in observation, ideation, problem-solving and iterative design
- Understand the importance of communication skills through teamwork and storytelling
- See the impact of creative thinking in application through making

Free basic guidelines are available for teachers to use as a basis for their own lesson planning. Full teaching resources, training and support are available under a schools subscription: <http://www.fixing.education/fixperts>

# Fixperts for schools FAQs

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## Everything you need to know about running Fixperts in your school.

Anything we've missed?  
Let us know.

- What is Fixperts?
- What is a Fixperts project?
- How do we run Fixperts at our school?
- How long does it take to run a Fixperts project?
- What ages can participate in a Fixperts project?
- Do we need special materials or spaces to run a Fixperts project?
- How should we manage ordering materials?
- What does it cost to run a Fixperts project?
- What is a Fix Partner and how do we find them?
- Can we run a Fixperts project without a real-life Fix Partner?
- Do we have to find the problem before starting the project?
- Do we have to make a film?
- How does Fixperts link to curriculum?
- Can Fixperts come to our school to deliver a workshop?
- Does Fixperts deliver training for teachers?
- Do you have examples of Fixperts projects in other schools?
- How can Fixperts fit into our carousel/timetable?

## What is Fixperts?

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Fixperts is an education programme which challenges students to create ingenious solutions to everyday problems. Rooted in a creative, human-centered design process, it integrates Design & Technology, engineering thinking and practical making skills.

We offer free guidelines and materials to universities and schools to allow them to run Fixperts projects independently. We offer support in the form of training, facilitation advice and extended/bespoke materials.

We do this because we think the world desperately needs creative problem solvers, who combine ingenuity with empathy and resilience. We started in universities and have moved to working with schools because this is where we can make the most difference to the innovators of tomorrow.

We are a not-for-profit (company limited by guarantee) currently reliant on volunteer, grant and donor support. We are building commercial revenue streams to make us financially sustainable into the longer term.

We are run by a small group of individuals with deep expertise in design education and public engagement.

We support open access and sharing and send and share content and materials and ingenious fixes far and wide, but the Fixperts name is protected by trademark to ensure it reflects our values and quality standards. Please use our name and our materials respectfully.

## What is a Fixperts project?

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Fixperts always involves fixing something for someone else. A Fixperts project in a school can take anything between a couple of hours and a whole term.

All Fixperts projects challenge participants:

- To solve problems creatively, which encourages agency, resourcefulness and resilience
- To fix for someone else (the Fix Partner), which encourages generosity, empathy and a social orientation
- To work in teams, which encourages collaboration, negotiation and respect
- To gift the solution to the Fix Partner which develops generosity, inclusion and community
- To tell their story, which encourages insight, perspective and critical skills
- To do all this in real life, which encourages a results orientation, requires prototyping and making skills and to bring it to completion, and to share their ideas openly, which encourages an innovation culture.

In all formats, even the shortest, students can experience the key values that Fixperts promotes, such as empathy, design for social good, prototyping, and teamwork.

To access our teaching resources go to <http://www.fixing.education/fixperts>. If you need advice on how to adapt Fixperts to your situation just get in touch.

## How do we run Fixperts at our school?

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There are a few options depending on your interest and needs.

### **Run it independently - just download the free resources and get started**

Download the activities and accompanying resources and run these sessions as part of timetabled lessons, as a standalone session, an after-school club or an off-timetabled day. Let us know how you get on and we can share your amazing fixes on our website or social media feeds.

### **Subscribe to access full teaching resources, training and support**

A schools subscription offers rich and detailed materials and guidelines developed with schools and young people in mind. There's a cost associated with it, which includes discounts on teacher training and workshops. Sign up to a schools subscription at <http://www.fixing.education/fixperts>

### **We can work with you**

We have worked with schools to provide a range of services, from introductory talks, taster sessions and workshops as well as extended, adapted or rich materials. Get in touch to find out more.

## How long does it take to run a Fixperts project?

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A Fixperts project does not have a fixed timeframe. The 'warm up' activities available to subscription members can be run in as little as a one-hour lesson slot, and could be used as an introduction or stand-alone learning experience. A Fixperts project can be delivered in a series of 3-4 sessions, but can easily be run over a half or full term, allowing for a more iterative approach to produce refined prototypes, or to pursue the option of making a Fix Film capturing the fix.

## What ages can participate in a Fixperts project?

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Fixperts projects have been successfully tried and tested with a very wide age range - from 4 to 80. There is no age limit, but content needs to be adapted to suit the group you are working with.

A full Fixperts project is particularly suited to KS3 and KS4.

## What does it cost to run a Fixperts project?

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It's important to us that Fixperts can reach as many young people as possible. For this reason, the resources to get you started are free to download from our website.

Extended teaching materials which include specially made films and other rich content are available for subscription members at a cost. Training, mentoring, customising materials and the other services we provide also come at a cost.

Each activity in the extended materials comes with a shopping list of basic materials which should be available in your school or locally at low cost.

## Do we need special materials or spaces to run a Fixperts project?

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Fixperts projects involve lots of making and modelling, and are ideally done in a space which can handle messy work, like a workshop, but a classroom is fine too.

Modelling materials and tools include things that are available in school workshops, art and DT departments, or available locally at low cost. But it doesn't matter if you're using lolly sticks and sticky tape or a 3D printer - successful Fixperts projects don't rely on sophisticated tools.

## How should we manage ordering materials?

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If you have a small number of students taking part (such as an after-school club), you may be able to order materials to demand by asking your pupils to write a 'shopping list' when they have come up with their concept. Modelling materials can be anything from old cereal packets to Styrofoam. Some schools use left-overs from previous projects! Pre-ordering some basic materials that can be worked with in any environment (such as wire, polypropylene sheet, balsa wood, Polymorph or Sugru) would be useful.

## What is a Fix Partner and how do we find them?

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A Fix Partner is an independent person who works with the Fixperts Team. They offer insight into a problem or challenge they face in their everyday lives and feedback on proposed solutions. Ideally you will work with a real-life Fix Partner - it always yields the best results. But if this isn't possible we have successfully tested workarounds for schools; this guidance is included in the full resources.

Almost anyone can be a Fix Partner, but some people have problems that are a good fit for a Fixperts project. It's good to find a broad need that has a negative impact on the life of the Fix Partner but is not a straightforward repair or task (like fixing a shelf).

You can find your Fix Partner anywhere, for example:

### **In school**

Role holders in school in areas such as: catering, cleaning and janitorial, reception, security, PE department, librarians or teachers. We've also seen some schools successfully involve other students as Fix Partners.

### **In a school community**

Grandparents, family members, friends or neighbours living with an illness or a disability, new mothers.

### **Outside school**

Feeder primary school, nursery, local community centre, day-centres and care homes, special schools, local shop owners or small businesses, 1 O'Clock Clubs or after school clubs.

## Can we run a Fixperts project without a real-life Fix Partner?

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Yes. There are many benefits to working with a real-life 'client', including addressing some GCSE course requirements and developing confidence, professionalism and communication skills. However, we know that this may not be suitable for all schools or students.

Fixperts is about setting a challenge and supporting the prototyping process with real feedback. We have successfully tested a range of workarounds for schools and this guidance is included in the full Fixperts materials available to subscription members.

## Do we have to find the problem before starting the project?

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Not usually. If you feel your students are mature enough to interview a potential Fix Partner and identify a problem themselves, this is a valuable part of the Fixperts process. This works especially well if you have a small group of students and are working with a partner organisation such as a care home, an after school club etc.

However, in some cases it may be easier to do the preliminary research yourself before your students meet the Fix Partner. This allows you to plan the students first meeting with the partner, and to gently guide students in a worthwhile direction.

## Do we have to make a film?

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No. Telling the story of the fix is central to any Fixperts project because it encourages a deeper understanding and critical perspective on the process, but this does not need to be done through film. A simple storyboard, a comic or a blog post fulfils the same purpose. Happily, because Fixperts at university level always make films, you have a bank of over 300 Fix Films to use as a resource to engage and discuss your student's work.

## How does Fixperts link to curriculum?

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Fixperts has extremely direct and obvious affinities with Design & Technology and other STEM subjects - in fact we are featured prominently in one of the first ever STEM technical qualifications available to schools in 2018. Art, science and engineering teachers have all already engaged with Fixperts, and through storytelling and community engagement we have discussed cross-curricular links with literacy and citizenship. However, Fixperts does benefit from some knowledge and understanding of materials, tools and making, so having a teacher or technician with these skills on hand can be very useful.

## Can Fixperts come to our school to deliver a workshop?

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We don't usually deliver workshops directly in schools as a service - but we definitely know people who can!

We run a network of skilled independent Fixperts facilitators, who love spending their days introducing young people to the fun and satisfaction of fixing their worlds. Get in touch with us and we can help you get going with them.

## Does Fixperts deliver training for teachers?

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We offer training directly to schools where there is a minimum of 4-6 in a group - this can be from one or a cluster of schools together. We are also working with partners on CPD events. Get in touch with your needs or sign up to the Fixperts newsletter to keep in touch with training opportunities.

## Do you have examples of Fixperts projects in other schools?

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We regularly feature Fixperts projects which are happening in schools on our website, so check there first.

If you have specific questions please get in touch - we have a steadily increasing bank of examples and case studies which includes everything from running Fixperts on a stall in a summer fair to the brave Bradley Stoke school in Bristol who ran Fixperts across a whole year group for a day! Military exercise doesn't even come close..

## How can Fixperts fit into our carousel/timetable?

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We know that many schools have a carousel system in DT, so if you want to deliver the project through DT lessons it can be done on a carousel with other projects, or delivered at a particular time of year with each class using different facilities such as a workshop, a textiles or a graphics suite. We think it is part of the challenge for students to learn to design with whatever facilities they have available!